



From the Bureau of Special Education

Featured Story:

Connecticut State Advisory Council (SAC) on Special Education

The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) is pleased to highlight the leadership that the Connecticut State Advisory Council (SAC) provides on special education matters to our State. The SAC has been authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) since the Act's inception in 1975 to serve in an advisory capacity on statewide special education issues. The IDEA requires representative membership which includes parents, teachers, individuals with disabilities, state officials, program administrators, and representatives from the following areas:

- Institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
- Other State agencies involving in financing or delivery of related services
- Private and public charter schools;
- Vocational, community, or business organizations concerned with the provision of transition services;
- State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
- State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

SAC is also authorized to serve under Chapter 164 Section 10-76i of the Connecticut General Statutes. In their capacity on the SAC, members are charged with advising the Connecticut General Assembly, State Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education on policy, statewide practices, and legal issues concerning the needs of school age children eligible for special education services. Additionally, the SAC addresses all five goals of the comprehensive Plan of the State Board of Education, which can be viewed at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/commish/comp_plan06-11.pdf. For 2008-09, Brenda Sullivan is serving as the Advisory Council Chair. For more information about the SAC, specific SAC required mandates under federal law, annual reports, and annual activities with the BSE, please visit: <http://www.ctsac.org/index.cfm?event=page.index>. In our next Featured Story, the BSE will highlight leadership support through the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center.



*Still Water Pond
in Torrington, CT
Photo by Katherine Ryan*



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Mark Your Calendars...

- SEDAC – Oct. 1 Child Count Timely Deadline: December 15, 2008
- SEDAC – Oct. 1 Child Count Accurate Deadline: December 23, 2008

State of the State Child Find Requirements

THE BUREAU BULLETIN



Child Find is a process designed to identify, locate and evaluate individuals (birth through 21 years of age) with disabilities who may need special education services. State and local educational agencies are given the responsibility by federal and State laws to conduct child find activities so that children who need special services have the opportunity to receive those services. This requirement has been in place since the beginning of legislation for serving children with disabilities in P.L. 94-142 in 1975. OSEP encourages states to assess the comprehensiveness of their Child Find systems. Each statewide system should include procedures for public awareness, referral, screening of health and development as components of a comprehensive Child Find system. Child Find activities should be coordinated across state and local agencies to ensure efficient use of resources. As part of monitoring for compliance with the IDEA, the BSE examines policies and procedures related to Child Find and seeks to provide the necessary technical assistance for strengthening a comprehensive Child Find system—at state and local levels. The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), an agency partnering in this process, provides guidance to families concerning the identification process—this information is located on the CPAC [website](#). Additionally, readers are encouraged to review IDEA information on what a Child Find system entails: <http://www.childfindidea.org/elements.htm>. An addition was made in IDEA 2004 to specify children who are homeless or wards of the State found in Section 612 (a)(3)(A):

*All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities **who are homeless children or are wards of the State** and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and a practical method developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services.*

The US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) provides guidance addressing the challenges that come with engaging in Child Find activities with the homeless population: <http://www.rfcnetwork.org/content/view/265/47/>. Please stay posted for information regarding Child Find through the *Bureau Bulletin*.

Monitoring: Updates

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Connecticut will be submitting its third Annual Performance Report based on 2007-08 data to OSEP on February 2, 2009. Stakeholders have been meeting around 20 indicators to look at data and analyze improvement activities. We would like to thank those districts who have diligently assisted the BSE in ensuring data has been timely and accurate. Connecticut was determined to meet requirements for the 2005-06 school year, and need assistance for the 2006-07 school year due to some areas of noncompliance. District APRs are scheduled to be disseminated in early spring 2009. Focused monitoring will concentrate on the area of academic achievement as defined by the following Key Performance Indicator (KPI): *Increase the effectiveness of efforts to educate students with an IEP as demonstrated by improved:*

- procedural compliance with IDEA;
- participation in statewide assessments; and
- performance in statewide assessments.

This KPI is directly aligned with Indicator 3 *Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments* of the State Performance Plan (SPP). Districts selected for monitoring will be notified by the end of December.

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Secondary Transition: TWNDP

THE BUREAU BULLETIN



The attached memo provides clarification regarding how a district should count hours as [Time-with-Non-Disabled Peers \(TWNDP\)](#) as it relates to the participation of students with disabilities in job placements and other community-based training opportunities as well as in regular classroom settings. This guidance was issued in a December 2002 Memorandum and still reflects the Bureau of Special Education's current guidance on this topic. For more information regarding TWNDP as it relates to job placements or community-based setting, contact Dr.

Patricia Anderson at 860-713-6923 or patricia.anderson@ct.gov. If you have any questions regarding TWNDP as it relates to regular education classes, contact Michael Smith at 860-713-6931 or michael.s.smith@ct.gov.

Students in Parentally Placed Private Schools: Requirements

From time to time the BSE receives inquiries from districts and parents for clarification on responsibilities associated with Child Find, IEP implementation, and services for children with disabilities when the parent or legal guardian has voluntarily placed the child in a private school. Three major requirements include:

- a. **Consultation:** Each school district must consult yearly with private school representatives and representatives of parents of parentally placed private school children with disabilities regarding child find; the determination of the proportionate amount of federal funds available to serve such children; the consultation process and how it will operate throughout the school year to ensure that parentally placed private school children with disabilities identified through child find can meaningful participate in special education and related services; and how, when there is disagreement regarding the provision or type of services, the school district will explain their decisions. Once this consultation has occurred, the school district shall obtain a written affirmation signed by the representatives of the participating private schools located within the school district. This information is submitted as a requirement with the LEA's IDEA grant application.
- b. **Child Find:** The school district shall conduct all child find activities for private school children with disabilities who are attending private schools located within that school district. This includes the location, identification and evaluation of all such private school children with disabilities. The funds utilized for these purposes are cannot to be used in determining whether the LEA has met its obligation with proportionate share.
- c. **Services Plan:** After the consultation process and child find activities are completed, each school district must make the final decision about what services will be provided. No private school child with a disability has an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the child would receive if enrolled in a public school. However, a services plan must be developed and implemented for each child with disabilities *who has been designated* by the school district (in which the private school is located) to receive special education and related services. Each services plan must describe the specific special education and related services the school district will provide to that child in light of the services the school district has determined it will make available to private school children with disabilities.

Readers should refer to guidance in the [2007 SDE Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Services Plan](#) presentation or contact Brian Cunnane at brian.cunnane@ct.gov. As noted in the October Bulletin, OSEP has its own [FAQ](#) available for ages 3-21 concerning this topic.



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Connecticut Surrogate Parent Program

THE BUREAU BULLETIN



Surrogate parents are responsible for representing the student in all matters relating to special education. This includes identification, evaluation, placement and provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Surrogate parents are also responsible for participating in the IEP planning process. A Surrogate Parent is appointed by the SDE for any child committed under the Department of Children and Families (DCF) who needs or may need special education services. Upon appointment, Surrogate Parents now commit to state-wide travel in order to maintain their assignments to students in the event that the student's residence is changed, so as to provide the student with enhanced stability in their educational programming. The Connecticut Surrogate Parent Program is overseen by Christine Spak with the BSE. Requests for information about this program and surrogate parent appointments can be directed to her by e-mailing surrogate.office@ct.gov. Please check our website for opportunities to serve as a contracted surrogate parent by visiting <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2651&q=320416>.

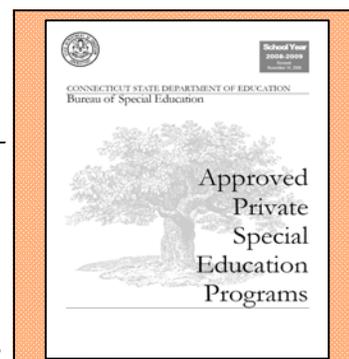
Bureau Happenings

Approved Private School Directory Updated

An updated directory of approved private special education programs is now available on our website. Each special education program updated its program description, as appropriate, and updated its contact information. For more information about approved private programs in special education or about the process for becoming an approved private program, contact Donna Cambria by e-mailing donna.cambria@ct.gov.

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Transition Assessment Resource Manual Available

Readers may wish to view the new Transition Assessment Resource Manual recently posted to SDE/BSE's website: Publications/Secondary Transition. Please check: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730#publications> or contact Dr. Patricia Anderson for more information.

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BSE Welcomes New Support Staff

The BSE is excited to announce recent staffing changes. Lisa Spooner moved from the Due Process Unit to now serve as the administrative assistant to the BSE Bureau Chief, Anne Louise Thompson. Ms. Spooner will also continue supporting Due Process efforts. Marlene Chameroy has resumed her extensive responsibilities as support staff to BSE education consultants. Tomorra Williams now assists the Surrogate Parent Office. The BSE was also fortunate to complete the hiring of two new support staff: Katherine Taylor and Regina Scharborough. Ms. Taylor and Ms. Scharborough have recently joined us and will be assuming office duties across multiple areas. The BSE is extremely grateful for the energy, professionalism, and personal best each staff member contributes individually and overall to the BSE team!

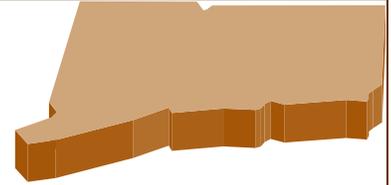
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Bureau Happenings

THE BUREAU BULLETIN

State Personnel Development Grant Overview

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) is a federal grant received by the BSE for a five year period. The grant was awarded in October 2005 and is currently coordinated by Dana Corriveau, a BSE education consultant. There are four target areas that the grant funds: scaling up evidence based practices; building collaborative relationships between families and schools; developing an early intervention best practice training manual; and certifying paraprofessionals to become highly qualified special education teachers. This grant award is often referenced in the context of providing personnel development and technical assistance opportunities aligned with the [State Performance Plan](#).



SERC is scaling up evidence-based practices in the areas of positive behavior supports (PBS), early intervention, and literacy teams. Districts demonstrating best practices in these areas have been identified and will be available to partner with other districts to scale up these practices beginning this spring. Paraprofessionals as Certified Educators (PACE) is being done by Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) in four urban districts including New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury. This is to build a highly qualified special education teaching pool in these districts and to have a teaching population as diverse as the students being served. Waterbury is currently beginning the application process, while the other three cohorts are finishing their programs. Building Collaborative Relationships with Families and Schools is being done by the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC). There are six districts involved in this work. Connecticut's Birth to Three System has revised its natural environment guidelines and will be publishing a training manual and DVD to demonstrate best practices in early intervention. Training for services provided is scheduled to take place in January.

Please continue to check the *Bulletin* for postings and announcements concerning updates and trainings that are part of the SPDG efforts or by contacting Dana Corriveau at dana.corriveau@ct.gov.

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Federal Focus

Report Card and Transcript Guidance

For students with disabilities, questions arise about whether the information conveyed by report cards and transcripts can include information about the students' disabilities, including whether those students received special education and related services. The Office for Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education recently issued guidance to provide state and local education agencies with information concerning disclosure of disability on report cards and transcripts for students with disabilities attending public elementary and secondary schools, under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (29 U.S.C. § 794) and its implementing regulation (34 C.F.R. Part 104) and Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulation (28 C.F.R. Part 35). The document also discusses two other relevant federal laws, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulation (34 C.F.R. Part 300) and the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (20 U.S.C. §1232g) and its implementing regulation (34 C.F.R. Part 99). Please refer to newly released federal guidance concerning this issue at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20081017.html>.

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Resources and Opportunities

Learning Disabilities Guidelines Professional Development

For more information and news on the upcoming training sessions about the soon to be published *Guidelines for the Identification of Students with Learning Disabilities*, please access the IDEA Partnership site, Shared Work at the following web address www.sharedwork.org. Sign in and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on NCLB/IDEA Collaboration Community. Click on Connecticut on the left. The password for entrance is CTLD. Please contact either Perri Murdica (860-713-6942; perri.murdica@ct.gov) or Patricia Anderson (860-713-6923; patricia.anderson@ct.gov) with any questions you may have. Information regarding January roll-out sessions will be updated as information becomes available. Keep an eye on the *Bulletin* for updates!

Expanding Horizons Conference

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The 11th Annual Conference on Educating Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms is on December 9, 2008, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The theme for this year is Expanding Horizons: Technology Benefits All Students. Please visit the SERC [website](#) for additional information or download the printable [brochure](#).

Your Regional RESC: Programs and Services for All Learners

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In the October 2008 *Bulletin*, the BSE highlighted a short segment on the RESC Alliance and described how each region of Connecticut has a specific Regional Education Service Center (RESC) geographically positioned to address needs of consumers. Additionally, the RESC organizations work together to meet broader statewide needs through the RESC Alliance. In this edition of the Bulletin, each RESC presents a sample of the services available in the attached [overview](#). Readers are encouraged to contact area RESCs separately for additional information using the contact information provided. There are many exciting initiatives underway and exciting opportunities for future collaboration among RESCs, districts, the SDE, SERC, and other organizations committed to serving Connecticut children, youth, and families. Get to know the RESC in your region!

Regional Education Service Centers (RESC)

[ACES](#)

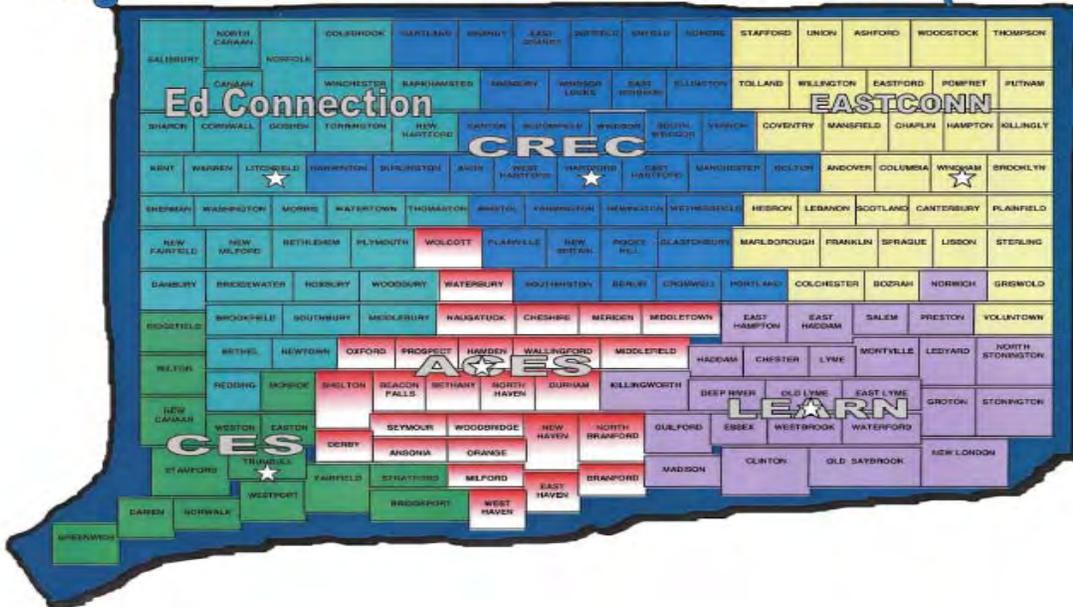
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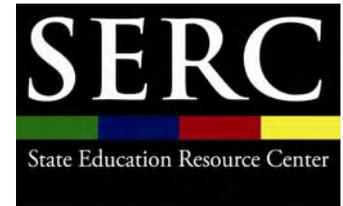


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SERC Library: Beyond the Shelves

THE BUREAU BULLETIN

For nearly 40 years, many members of Connecticut's education community have associated the State Education Resource Center (SERC) with its library. When SERC was founded as the Special Education Resource Center in 1969, it housed its library in a small classroom and media room at St. Joseph College. Today, the SERC Library has grown exponentially, annually serving about 11,000 educators, administrators, service providers, college faculty and students, and parents and families across Connecticut at its Middletown location and many more through its Web pages. The library, located in Middletown at the State Office Building at 25 Industrial Park Road, offers thousands of educational resources such as books, instructional materials, tests, CD-ROMs, journals, online databases, and more. ([Please review full Article](#))



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Secondary Transition Presentation Support Available

Parent/educator teams are currently available to meet the growing number of requests for presentations about the basics of transition planning and services. These presentations can be customized to meet the needs of a specific target audience. The presentations provide an overview of the essentials that every parent, family member, and service provider needs to know about this topic. Please note that this training session on Secondary Transition Planning for students receiving special education services is available to your district/organization at NO COST (availability limited only by budgeted funds for the year). If you are interested, please complete and return the attached [registration flyer](#) or contact Karen Stigliano at 860-632-1485, X 317 or stigliano@ctserc.org for more information.

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National Dropout Prevention Center's Newsletter—Focus on Families

We often hear how important the three R's are in dropout prevention: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. Looking at the third R, Relationships, we naturally think first about the connections teachers and other school personnel are making with students- engaging them at a personal level; knowing each of them, their interests, their special problems, and their aspirations; caring about them as individuals; and thus not letting them fall through the cracks. The National Dropout Prevention Center is a resource available to districts and agencies. Please check out the latest newsletter from the organization ([attached](#)).

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Nondiscrimination Statement

The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Inquiries regarding the Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to the Equal Opportunity Employment Director, State of Connecticut Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457-1543, 860-807-2071.



Interesting idea for a featured story? Willing to write as a guest columnist? Comments or feedback on the format? Share your thoughts with the Bureau Bulletin coordinator by e-mailing jacqueline.kelleher@ct.gov.

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